

# INFANTRY LETTERS



## SUCCESS, NOT MISERY

Major Timothy P. Maroney's article "Train to be Miserable" (INFANTRY, January-February 1983, page 9) made me wonder. What's the point in being miserable?

If I want to be miserable, all I have to do is leave the house in a rainstorm and go sit in a ditch, alone, uncovered, and wait for the misery to come. Then I can appreciate it in all its degradation for a while. But how long do I have to sit there to achieve the Level 1 misery that Major Maroney is striving for?

The author has a good point — training must be more demanding and more challenging — but he has carried it too far. Our goal should not be to be miserable but to learn how to overcome adversity. Individual soldiers and teams must rise above any situation in which they find themselves and accomplish their mission. They can do this by hardening themselves and by improving their resolve. But I suggest they focus not on training to be miserable but on training to be successful, regardless

of the conditions. There's a big difference.

If we do not know where we are going, we usually end up somewhere else. And failing would make us *really* miserable.

RAY L. TOWLE  
CPT, Infantry  
Fort Benning, Georgia

## COMBAT OLYMPICS

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph J. Angsten ("Prepared to Fight," INFANTRY, January-February 1983, page 8) makes a good point about our soldiers being physically prepared to fight, but I suggest that it be carried further. I advocate that units develop "combat olympics" in which the best aspects of PT, SQT, crew drill, ARTEP, and FTX are combined to increase training realism, participation, and motivation.

The idea is not so unusual. Civilians compete in things like the National Survival Game (squad tactics with paint pistols), orienteering

(fitness and map skills), and the biathlon (fitness and marksmanship). And innovative units such as the 25th Infantry Division have initiated training excellence competitions (TOW crew, rifle squad, and such), a similar concept.

The crux of the issue is that the Army has little need for physical fitness; what it needs is *combat* fitness (mission-related physical strength, stamina, and suppleness and mental readiness). An Army-wide analysis of fitness several years ago identified six levels of fitness by MOS, but then stumbled over its own complicated administration. The point remains, however, that PT alone is inadequate to prepare soldiers for combat just as it was in World War II. The "experts" with combat experience back then initiated the log and sandbag drills, a practice the Marine Corps maintains. And if we look at infantry combat assault requirements, the relevance of the run, dodge, and jump is apparent.

Combat olympics, then, focused on combat fitness, would do all the things Colonel Angsten suggests but would add to them training and competition. A commander might, for example, have a Dragon crew move from station to station (from ambush scenario to combat assault to first aid to reacting to an ambush), all with MILES equipment, with five miles between stations and only a map with which to find the stations. And he might consider having them eat a lunch of C-rations on the way or holding the unit fund beer bust at the end. (If they don't finish, they don't drink.) The crew that has the best score and speed could be rewarded with a three-day pass or special award.

And for psychological readiness, the commander should dig out those

mouflage kits, or volunteer his unit to work in a slaughterhouse for a charity event. Or he might rotate his medics through the hospital's emergency room, surgical unit, and morgue. He might hold unit sick call in a tent using his unit medic. He might also lay some smoke mines on the route of march and schedule some OPFOR model plane air attacks.

In short, with some planning and imagination, any unit can begin to integrate combat fitness with its training and, in the process, to improve readiness and morale with the added challenge and competition.

Along these same lines, Major Maroney's "Train to be Miserable" (January-February 1983, page 9) has some admirable goals (increasing levels of difficulty), but the wording of the goal (being miserable) is questionable. We should be training for success and for the confidence and competence that result from it. Lots of folks are already miserable — troops learn more effectively when warm, dry, and successful. Misery doesn't take much practice.

JAMES E. LARSEN  
Hampton, Virginia

## REVIEW "A BIT MUCH"

Since the Army War College's Strategic Studies Institute was the official sponsor of Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr.'s *On Strategy*, Dr. Joe P. Dunn's review in your January-February 1983 issue (page 47) was read here with some interest. I must say that I found his charge that the Army War College had sponsored "a mediocre study" with "superficial analysis and shoddy scholarship" a bit much, even for a critical review.

Professor Dunn's dyspeptic views did not come as a complete surprise; along with others in the military and academic community, he reviewed the draft manuscript before its publication. While critical then as now, he began his earlier evaluation with a revealing disclaimer: "I make no claims as a strategist," he wrote in

1981. "I am definitely a historian rather than a political scientist, strategist or analyst. Clausewitz, Jomini, Fuller, Hart, etc., leave me cold. I believe the study of the principles of war has some value in provoking thought, but I question any specific applications.... I have some question whether principles of war are strategic issues."

As Major General Jack N. Merritt (then Army War College Commandant) said in his Foreword to *On Strategy*, "It is important for the reader to understand what this book is and what it is not. It is not, nor was it intended to be, a history of the Vietnam war... What was intended was a narrow focus on the war in the area of major concern to the Army War College — the application of military science to the national defense... [u]sing Clausewitzian theory and the classic principles of war...."

Professor Dunn is certainly entitled to his views in regard to *On Strategy*, views with which your readers may or may not agree. But for the sake of our future battlefield success, I hope they do *not* share his view that there is no need to understand and apply the principles of war and "Clausewitz, Jomini, Fuller, Hart, etc."

KEITH A. BARLOW  
Colonel, Infantry  
Director, Strategic  
Studies Institute

*DR. DUNN REPLIES:* In regard to Colonel Barlow's letter, honorable men may differ, as apparently we do about Colonel Summers' book. I am more interested here in addressing the quotations excerpted from my January 1981 personal letter to Colonel Summers.

Colonel Summers sent me galley proofs of his book just before its original publication and requested any comments that I might have. Since the book was obviously in its final stages and whatever I said could have little effect, I did not consider my remarks a formal review. I

responded merely as a courtesy in an informal, personal manner. Since many of my assessments were harsh, I attempted to soften the tone by a purposefully over-stated disclaimer. Had I known that my private letter would become public property, I would have been more formal, precise, and expansive and less off-the-cuff.

It is interesting to note that the most salient point of my opening remarks — that too many amateur students of theory tend to read their prejudices back into the classical tomes instead of honestly evaluating how classical theory speaks to the contemporary situation — was deleted from Colonel Barlow's quotations.

I have already stated my views on the book as scholarship both in my review and in a longer personal letter to Colonel Summers at the time the review appeared. I hope that I won't have to re-read excerpts of that letter in print in the future. Henceforth, greater caution will be my practice.

One point about the book does merit re-emphasis. My largest criticism was not the argument but the rather amateurish means of presenting it. I would hope that this consideration is as important in the military community as it is in academia. I am willing to defer to Colonel Barlow's obviously correct assessment of the role of strategy. If Colonel Summers' book plays a significant role in reassessing Vietnam strategy, then I may be more kindly disposed in the future. For the moment, I remain skeptical and will stand by my present evaluation.

## 11TH AIRBORNE MEMORIAL

Plans have been unveiled recently by members of the 11th Airborne Division Association to build a memorial to honor the men of that great division who served so valiantly during the 1940s and 1950s.

These plans call for the memorial to be placed at Arlington Cemetery if enough money can be raised. It will depict an 11th Airborne trooper with

his rifle raised triumphantly over his head in victory.

Anyone who would like to contribute to this fund is encouraged to send their checks or money orders (payable to 11th Airborne Memorial) to P.O. Box 1391, Peoria, Illinois 61654.

We will appreciate any help and will send a receipt by return mail.

LESTER E. LONG, Chairman  
Memorial Committee

## MARKSMANSHIP BADGES

Ever since it fired the first shot heard 'round the world, the American soldier's individual weapon has been his most important piece of equipment — whether it was a musket, a Kentucky rifle, a Springfield, a Carbine, or an M1, M14, or M16.

For that reason, soldiers over the years have worn their weapons qualification badges with pride and distinction. But in recent years these badges seem to have lost their place on our uniforms. For example, our senior noncommissioned officers and our officers as well usually do not wear them in official photographs.

This may be responsible for the fact that the soldiers do not wear them either. The officers and NCOs are saying, in effect, that the marksmanship badge is not important.

We, the infantry, must lead the way and set the example by returning to the policy of wearing this badge of distinction and professionalism. Commanders need to encourage and even require that all infantrymen wear their badges on all appropriate uniforms prescribed by AR 670-1.

Let's strengthen the bond between leaders and followers by wearing our badges of professionalism and distinction. Let's return to the proud tradition of wearing our weapons qualification badges.

JAMES W. ENGLISH  
2LT, Infantry, USAR  
Bakersfield, California

## ON MORALE

I served throughout World War II with the 3d Infantry Division, and I still remember the importance of morale in a unit — a subject that I believe is now often neglected. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in his *Crusade in Europe*, called morale

“the greatest single factor in successful war” and went on to discuss how morale can be achieved. Some of his comments are worth our renewed attention:

*Endurable comparisons with the enemy in other essential factors — leadership, discipline, technique, numbers, equipment, mobility, supply, and maintenance — are prerequisite to the existence of morale. It breeds most readily upon success; but under good leaders it will be maintained among troops even during periods of adversity. The methods employed by successful leaders in developing morale differ so widely as to defy any attempt to establish rules. One observation, however, always applies: In any long and bitter campaign morale will suffer unless all ranks thoroughly believe that their commanders are concerned first and always with the welfare of the troops who do the fighting. A human understanding and a natural ability to mingle with all men on a basis of equality are more important than any degree of technical skill. . . .*

*Morale of the combat troops had always to be carefully watched. The capacity of soldiers for absorbing punishment and enduring privations is almost inexhaustible so long as they*

*believe they are getting a square deal, that their commanders are looking out for them, and that their own accomplishments are understood and appreciated. Any intimation that they are victims of unfair treatment understandably arouses their anger and resentment, and the feeling can sweep through a command like wildfire. . . .*

*Soldiers like to see the men who are directing operations. They properly resent any indication of neglect or indifference to them on the part of their commanders and invariably interpret a visit, even a brief one, as evidence of their commander's concern for them. Diffidence or modesty must never blind the commander to his duty of showing himself to his men, of speaking to them, of mingling with them to the extent of physical limitations. It pays big dividends in terms of morale, [which] given rough equality in other things, is supreme on the battlefield.*

Commanders might remember, too, that morale is also important in a peacetime unit and that the same basic methods of attaining it apply in garrison operations and in field training.

A.C. HANSON  
Bellflower, California

## MORTARS IN DIVISION 86

I wholeheartedly agree with Lieutenant Mark L. Torrey's premise (INFANTRY, January-February 1983, page 12) that the Division 86 organization is inadequate, but I believe that its inadequacy lies not in the platoon's proposed organization or equipment, but in the concept itself.

On the modern battlefield, most of our field artillery fires will be directed against counterbattery or pre-planned targets. Thus, mortars will be the infantry commander's most responsive — if not his only — means of bringing indirect fire on immediate suppression targets and targets of opportunity. Consolidating all mortars at the battalion level takes away that responsiveness from the individual who needs it most — the rifle company commander.

Under the Division 86 concept, the rifle company commander will be forced to compete for mortar fires with the other company commanders of the battalion. No longer will he

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have an indirect fire weapon system that is responsive solely to his needs. Hence, while the rifle company's flexibility and maneuverability may be increased by the establishment of a battalion consolidated mortar platoon, the advantages gained are far outweighed by the corresponding disadvantage in the combat power available to the rifle company commander.

JEFFREY A. JACOBS  
1LT, Infantry  
Fort Sill, Oklahoma

## SEEKING MEMBERS

The National Order of Battlefield Commissions, a relatively new organization, is still looking for many of the people who are eligible to join. Membership is open to any past or present member of the armed forces of the United States who received a battlefield commission.

Anyone who is eligible or who would like additional information is invited to write to me at 4396 Stemen St., Rt. #1, Lima, Ohio 45807.

DANIEL S. EBELING

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